DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 474 142 CE 084 409

AUTHOR	Weatherill, Pamela; Boyd, Elizabeth Reid
TITLE	There's More Than Just the Newspaper: A Pilot Study on the Social Literacies Required by Young Job Seekers.
INSTITUTION	Adult Literacy and Numeracy Australian Research Consortium, Melbourne. Victorian Centre.
SPONS AGENCY	Australian Dept. of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	47p.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text (Word): http://www.staff.vu.edu.au/alnarc/publications/01pamelaweathrillW A.doc.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adolescents; Developed Nations; Foreign Countries; *Functional Literacy; *Job Applicants; *Job Search Methods; *Knowledge Level; Labor Market; Literacy Education; Pretests Posttests; Secondary Education; Self Evaluation (Individuals); Socialization; Student Attitudes; *Unemployment; Workshops; Young Adults; *Youth
IDENTIFIERS	*Australia (Western Australia)

ABSTRACT

A study investigated job search literacies for a small sample of Western Australian youth currently seeking employment. Participants were 10 females and 4 males aged 15-24. The research design involved the presentation of job search information and exercises to develop literacy competencies in a participative workshop format. Participants completed three multiple choice questionnaires regarding job search intensity, job search efficacy, and exploration of the labor market. They completed the questionnaires prior to and after the workshop in person and at least two weeks following the workshops by telephone. Results indicated that between the pre- and post-workshop data collection, participants rated themselves as significantly more confident in performing job seeking tasks. Similar results were achieved between the pre-workshop questionnaire and the two-week followup. Participants were also more confident that joining clubs and community groups would assist them with their job search at the two-week followup. No significant differences were found between the post-workshop and the followup questionnaires. (Appendixes include a 26-item bibliography, questionnaires, and workshop materials.) (Author/YLB)

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There's More than Just the Newspaper

A pilot study on the social literacies required by young job seekers

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2001

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Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank:

The participants in this study
Adult Literacy and Numeracy Research Consortium (ALNARC)
Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA)

Eileen Hull
Department of Employment and Training
Western Australia

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Abstract

This study investigated job search literacies for a small sample of Western Australian youth, currently seeking employment. The research design involved the presentation of job search information and exercises to develop literacy competencies in a participative workshop format. Participants completed three multiple choice questionnaires regarding job search intensity, job search efficacy, and exploration of the labour market. The questionnaires were completed by participants prior to, and post the workshop in person, and at least two weeks following the workshop by telephone. The results indicated that between the pre and post workshop, participants rated themselves as significantly more confident in performing job seeking tasks. Similar results were achieved between the pre workshop questionnaire and the two week follow-up. Participants were also more confident that joining clubs and community groups would assist them with their job search at the two week follow-up. No significant differences were found between the post workshop and follow-up questionnaire. The implications of this research are discussed.

Introduction

> A post-structuralist perspective on literacy can help us understand the danger that arises when literacy is seen as a private or individual competency or set of competencies rather than a complex circulation of economic, political and ideological practices that inform daily life – competencies that invite or solicit [individuals] to acquiesce in their social and gendered positions within a highly stratified society and accept the agenthood assigned to them along the axes of race, class and gender. *(McLaren and Lankshear, 1993:413)*

This study investigated the job search literacy skills of Western Australian youth seeking employment, and the impact of social literacy training on their understanding and application of a variety of job search methodologies. For the purposes of this study youth were defined as males and females aged between 14 and 25 years.

Job search is the process by which individuals gather information about potential jobs and use this information to gain employment (Barber, Daly, Giannantonio & Philips, 1994). Job searching can adopt either formal or informal methods, or a combination of both. Informal job search methods usually involve using personal networks to identify job opportunities or applying to potential employers directly. Formal job search methods generally involve responding to advertisements (newspaper, internet or bulletin board), taking a government entry test or using the services of recruitment agencies. These descriptions of job search provide broad categories for job searching behaviour and are based on both assumed knowledge of job searching techniques by the population, and the ability of the individual to access and apply these strategies.

This study suggests that effectiveness in job search strategies requires a specific form of social literacy, a set of competencies which underlie job searching techniques and their application. In our definition of social literacy with regard to job seeking, we draw upon definitions and indeed debates surrounding cultural literacy:

> "[In] the enormously influential work of E.D. Hirsch, Jr, in Cultural Literacy, What Every American Needs to Know, Hirsch maintains that students are unable to read and write adequately if they lack 'the relevant background information, a particular body of shared information that expresses a privileged cultural currency with high exchange value in the public sphere'. Moreover, students who don't have this 'canon' will be unable "to function adequately in society." *(Lankshear and McClaren, 1993:15)*

However, as Lankshear and McClaren (1993:17) argue:

> "For Hirsch there is no struggle, just a common culture. ... The fact that different people will end up with different qualities of employment, different levels of qualification, different incomes and the differences – inequalities - that these entail is no more than inevitable given that natural transcendent historical order of things."

They go on to argue that:

> "The answer is not simply to take the voices and meanings of Others as givens ... to be celebrated naively and accepted as educational knowledge in their own right ... the literacies they enfold are not to be assumed to have equal weight with any other literacy form(s). 'On the contrary ... their differences are to be weighed against the capacity the y have for enabling people to locate themselves in their own histories *while simultaneously establishing the conditions for them to function as part of a wider democratic culture* . This, from a critical perspective, should be the educational test for all l iteracies." (1993:18-19, their italics).

We suggest that the social literacy of job seeking should not be regarded as one that simply represents background information. It is precisely that different people end up with different qualities of employment that we argue can rest in part upon social literacy skills in job seeking. A lack of knowledge of these competencies can disadvantage those who may be unequally positioned in the job market on the basis of economics, race, age or gender. We do not wish, however, to value particular skills of particular groupings over others. Special effort to learn from the participants in this study, to identify where they consider themselves to be located, and to aid in the establishment of skills and conditions for them to function effectively in seeking employment were among our goals.

Functionality is certainly crucial to our definition. As Tooth, Clark and McKenna (2000) have argued, the definition of literacy is a changing one that should be linked to functional uses. While Tooth et al. refer especially to literacy and health status, we make the link to social literacy and job seeker status. The social literacy required for job seeking is not a passive canon, but is indeed a changing one, and in the early 21st century, it is particularly dynamic, due to rapid technological and employment mode developments, coupled with changes in the labour market. The rationale for this study is that being 'literate' in job searching skills is essential for youth, at the beginning of their careers, and also a set of skills required by most people at some stage of their lives. Further, as McClaren and Lankshear (1993: 413) above attest, individuals are positioned differently within a highly stratified society along the axes of race, class and gender. Thus in this study, we were particularly interested in such differences with regard to literacy and job seeking and examined this as far as possible along the lines of gender by separating the groups into male and female participants.

Our study sought to investigate and develop job search literacy for a small sample of youth in Western Australia. Assisting youth to secure employment upon graduation from high school has been described by researchers as particularly important because regardless of "…. education or gender, getting a job in the first year after school is associated with a greatly increased likelihood of being employed in the future." (from OECD cited in Johnson, 2000:5). Further, the "…. unsuccessful transition from schooling into work or further education sets up a cumulative market disadvantage….. and …. this disadvantage is not evenly distributed between demographic groups ….of …. Indigenous, rural [communities] and women." (Johnson, 2000: 7). Providing training which assists youth and other disadvantaged groups such as indigenous, rural communities and women to obtain employment is likely to have a significant impact on the sense of self worth and general well being of the individual and is also likely to have cumulative benefits for the community.

Researchers have discussed at length the lack of youth understanding of job seeking methodologies and that youth have unrealistic expectations of the labour market. Barber et al (1994: 744), indicated that "... many job searchers hold unrealistic expectations regarding the process and outcomes of job search. While the lack of expertise in job search may be particularly prevalent among the young and inexperienced applicants, the vast popular self-help literature suggests that uncertainty regarding how to conduct a successful job search abounds for all types of searchers."

Previous research has demonstrated the need for training, and has discussed training in general terms. Researchers have described the need to develop skills in interview technique, completing application forms, and preparing a resume. These skills are important and essential in the job search process (in most cases), but job search also involves the more complex process of actually identifying where potential job vacancies and opportunities exist. This skill is what we have termed, for the purposes of this study, job search literacy, a specific social literacy. Based on our literature review regarding job search, we have defined job search literacy as the ability to apply the skills and knowledge of formal and informal search processes for gathering information about potential jobs. These skills are likely to be specific to the cultural environment in which one is seeking employment. They generally involve knowledge of the following job search methods: positions vacant websites; the days in which most positions are advertised in the newspaper (Wednesday & Saturday in Western Australia); use of local and community newspapers; and knowing which government, not for profit, and private sector agencies to register with and where to find them. Thus job search literacy involves not only where to look, but when to look. We argue therefore that it is just as important to train youth to look or seek employment on the days when they are likely to be the most successful, thus saving time and often limited resources. In Western Australia, for example, one should search the relevant internet websites on a daily basis, as these sites are updated daily. Moreover, internet slots for recruitment advertising are paid for on a short term basis, often only for a two week period. A 'job search smart' person would register their email address with the recruitment websites and have job details automatically forwarded to them. Newspapers on the other hand can be reviewed at least weekly on the day which is set aside for employment advertising. Community newspapers are also becoming an increasingly popular medium for employers to advertise vacancies.

The complex nature of the employment industry and the relationship between government, non-government, and the private sector is difficult to understand. Knowing which private sector recruitment agencies manage job placements for particular industries or fields, and being aware of the local CentreLink office and how to register with them will also be important for job seekers. A good understanding of each of these formal search methodologies will contribute to the successful identification of potential job vacancies.

Our discussion to date has focussed on formal search methodologies, but knowledge of informal search methods are at least as important if not more important than knowledge of formal search methods. At the same time it is frequently invisible in job search technique literature. Recruitment industry estimates indicate that at least 60% of positions are not advertised and are filled through employer networks and contacts. "Previous research suggests that using personal networks, compared with using formal channels, are the most common way to find a job, and they navigate individuals into better jobs with higher job satisfaction and earnings." (Drentea, 1998: 322). Therefore assisting young job seekers to develop confidence in approaching potential employers or recognising that their networks are

likely to be able to identify potential opportunities will provide youth with additional skills and knowledge which are likely to lead to successful job identification.

The use of informal search methods has become, over recent years, an area which is more widely investigated by researchers. Informal search methods which rely on one's networks and contacts are fraught with research difficulties, as self report methodologies can significantly over or under estimate the frequency of behaviour based on social desirability factors. Further, consideration should also be given to the fact that ".... access to certain job search methods may not be equally available to all job seekers. This, in itself, may be an important cause of labour market disadvantage." (Wielgosz & Carpenter, 1987: 152). Youth are likely to experience difficulty in applying this search methodology, given that their life experience has largely been confined to school, after school activities, and casual employment. In these environments youth are most likely to mix with their peers who are likely to be at a similar stage of life and therefore not necessarily able to provide a suitable network to assist in the job search process.

Researchers have suggested that informal search methodologies are likely to provide advantages to specific populations such wealthier socioeconomic groups, men, and single women (Drentea, 1998). Individuals from wealthier socioeconomic groups are likely to network and socialise with employed people who reinforce the Protestant ethic of work and success. Further, our society is structured in sex segregated ways, which encourage men and women to work and engage in social activities in single sex environments. Women are generally employed in traditional occupations which have lower pay, status and development opportunities as compared to men. Women are therefore likely to receive information from their networks about job opportunities in more traditional areas. Drentea (1998: 329) found that, "[f]or women, using informal job search methods perpetuated sex segregation, and using formal search methods reduced segregation in jobs." Finally, single women have more advantages than married women in using their networks to search for jobs largely because single women do not have the same responsibilities for managing the family outside of work hours and can focus on finding alternative employment (Keith & McWilliams, 1999).

Not withstanding the disadvantages which are likely to be experienced by certain populations, informal search is likely to identify more potential job opportunities as compared to formal search methods, which by their nature are highly competitive. Wielgosz & Carpenter's, (1987: 159) research conducted in the United States, demonstrated ".... that on average almost all methods of job search are associated with significantly shorter durations of search when compared with the state employment service." This knowledge further reinforces the need to develop job seeker's skills and confidence in undertaking informal job search activities.

Barber et al., (1994: 746) indicated that ".... informal sources require more social skills and self-confidence than relatively anonymous formal sources." Thus training in application of social skills appropriate for the business environment are likely to be beneficial for youth and contribute to successful job search. Individuals develop confidence in the application of skills and knowledge once they have successfully learned how and when to apply the particular strategy(s). Given that youth have limited exposure to the 'business world' this training is likely to be particularly beneficial to them. Villar, Juan, Corominas & Capell (2000: 407) undertook research in Spain with university graduate job seekers and concluded that "....

encouraging job-seekers to enlist the assistance of as many people as they can think of, in order to broaden the use of personal contacts as a source of successful job leads has become an essential part of job finding programs."

Further, Heaven's (1995: 227) research regarding teenage job search strategies in Australia, concluded that "…. the underlying processes of job search behaviours differ for boys and girls." Heaven's research indicated that males placed more emphasis on their application, and females tended to place more emphasis on activities such as work experience gained after school or during the summer. The investigation of gender differences among young job seekers is clearly a pertinent research issue.

In addition, research undertaken by Wanberg, Watt, & Rumsey's (1996: 84) investigated job-seeking behaviour and re-employment, concluded "….that a significant other's support for job seeking plays a crucial role in increasing an unemployed individual's job seeking behaviour and subsequent re-employment. These results emphasise the importance of including significant others in unemployment interventions aimed at increasing job seeking behaviour." This aspect of job seeking has not been widely explored and has not focussed on the impact of such factors on youth. The Westrek Study (2000) conducted with over 11,000 Western Australian youth regarding life and aspirations revealed that "[f]amilies and friends are the most important source of influence." (ibid: 17). Further respondents indicated that "[f]amilies are also the source of support and advice in even the most difficult of circumstances." (ibid: 16). Therefore, including significant others in the development of job search skills and support is likely to have a beneficial impact on the job seeking behaviours of youth.

The empirical evidence provided by youth workers working in the youth job search area has indicated that job search literacy, and basic verbal and written literacies are essential in order to conduct a successful job search. These basic literacies include knowledge about how to use the telephone book, street directory, and bus timetable for example. Previous research conducted by Wegmann (1983: 332) regarding job search training for youth concluded that, "[t]he main impact of the programs were to enable youth to locate unfilled jobs more quickly and to present themselves well enough to employers in order to assist them to be hired for these positions."

Johnson (2000) indicated that, "A sizeable proportion of young Western Australians are unprepared for life outside of school." Thus our research is two-fold firstly to develop an understanding of the level of youth knowledge of the variety of job search methodologies which are available to them. Secondly it presented in a workshop format some essential job search literacies in order to further develop both their knowledge and skills of various job search techniques. Our research team considers this study to be ground-breaking research, as the knowledge and application of job search literacies by a youth population in Western Australia has never been investigated. Further, this study acknowledges that job searching skills are an essential aspect of social literacy. Given the role that employment has on the future well being of youth and society, the development of these skills is likely to be particularly important. The world of employment continues to rapidly change and therefore the social literacies required in job searching will adapt to the needs of increasingly technological business environments.

Methodology

The research team met on the 19 October 2000, to discuss the objectives of this study, preliminary research which had been conducted in the area, and empirical knowledge which has been gained from working with young job seekers. A project time line was established and dates were set for job seeker workshops. The research team consisted of both researchers and practitioners.

The researchers reconvened on the 9 November 2000, to discuss the findings of the literature review and finalise the draft questionnaire. The three questionnaires are attached at Appendix B, C, D, and further information is outlined below regarding the content of the questionnaires. The researchers agreed that Pamela Weatherill, in her capacity as NSYO manager, would administer the questionnaire to the participants in an informal setting prior to the participants entering the training room. It was anticipated that an informal and relaxed approach to the administration of the questionnaire would facilitate the participant's ability to provide honest responses to the questionnaire. The second questionnaire was administered to participants at the conclusion of the workshop. The third questionnaire was presented to the participants by the workshop facilitator by telephone at least two weeks after having completed the workshop.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire was developed collaboratively with the contribution of the all the researchers. This ensured that both practice knowledges and research knowledges were admitted into the process equally. The use of the questionnaires was discussed at length The use of the questionnaires was discussed at length due to the topic of literacy forming the basis of this study, and the limited written literacy skills of some of the workshop participants. The use of the questionnaires is defended due to the need for questionnaire and form filling to be conducted as part of a 'normal' job search process. Two questionnaires were developed, one which could be completed by participants in an informal setting prior to the workshop, and one which could be completed at the conclusion of the workshop. It was also decided that the first questionnaire was to be readministered to participants over the telephone at least two weeks subsequent to their participation in the workshop.

The questionnaires included two items requesting gender and date of birth information which could be used to match participants at subsequent assessments. Questionnaires 1 and 3 were identical and included 18 items. Based on previous research findings it was decided to investigate job search intensity, job search efficacy, and exploration of the labour market. These topics related directly to the job search literacies which our workshop was seeking to provide, and also are likely to provide some useful comparisons with previous international research studies which have investigated these topics. Questionnaires 1 and 3 measured the following sub scales:

Job search intensity. One item was designed to identify participant's current job search intensity, based on a self report item. Answers were rated on a five point Likert scale ranging from (a) extremely to (e) Not at all.

Job search efficacy. Eight items were designed to assess job search efficacy and frequency using various job search methods. Job search efficacy refers to "... an individual's confidence in his or her ability to successfully perform a variety of job seeking activities." (Wanberg et al., 1996). Answers were rated on a five point Likert scale ranging from (a) extremely to (e) Not at all.

Exploration of the labour market. Nine items measured exploration of the labour market. The exploration of the labour market questions were designed to measure the actions that participants could take in their job search (Villar et al., 2000) and the frequency such actions had been taken. Five questions were concerned application of search methodologies and used a variety of scales which would allow the most accurate analysis of participants understanding of potential job search actions. Four questions were concerned with the frequency that the participant undertook such activities. Answers were rated on a six point Likert scale ranging from (a) daily to (e) Never.

Questionnaire 2 measured the eight job search efficacy items, and an additional item regarding exploration of the labour market. This item asked participants whether joining a club or community group would assist them with their job search.

Workshop

Based on knowledge gained through professional experience of working with job seekers, academic knowledge, and the literature review; Pamela Weatherill and Samantha Raisbeck (Youth Officer NSYO) jointly developed the content, style and format of the workshop. The workshops were held at the Northern Suburbs Youth Options centre (NSYO). (NSYO). As a Department of Training and Employment funded JobLink, NSYO provides youth with support and resources to undertake job search activities. The workshop involved a one day session commencing at 9.00 am and concluding at 3.30 pm. Separate workshops were held for male (13 November 2000) and female (14 November 2000) participants using the same content and format. Appendix E provides the workshop outline, and Appendix F an evaluation of the session. The workshops were held at the NSYO to familiarise the workshop participants with the job search resources which are available to them at the conclusion of the workshop, and that these services can be accessed at no cost.

The workshop encouraged the active involvement of the participants in all the session's activities. The workshop covered topics such as: a warm up exercise, passive written literacy (newspapers, phone book grab), active written literacy (form filling), paralinguistic literacy (interviews, cold calling/ canvassing), electronic literacy, network literacy, and evaluation. Writing was kept to a minimum in all workshop activities. The workshop included breaks over morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea allowing for a maximum level of interaction between the participants. A complete analysis of the workshop activities and outcomes is attached at Appendix F.

Participants

Participants for this study were sourced through City of Joondalup, City of Stirling, Town of Cambridge, Town of Vincent, Cambridge Youth Centre, Anchors Youth Centre, Passages Youth Centre, Victory Life Church, Mission Employment Innaloo, Centrelink Innaloo, JPET Joondalup and Women's Healthworks. Recruitment involved a phone call giving a brief explanation of the project and a fax giving all the details.

The participants were aged between 15 and 24 years with a mean age of 19 years and five months. Ten female participants took part in this study and were aged between 15 and 24 years with a mean age of 19 years and five months. Four male participants took part in this study and were aged between 16 and 22 years with a mean age of 19 years and five months.

A $20 honorarium was provided to participants for their contribution to this study. Despite this incentive only four of the invited male participants attended the first workshop. Details of the honorarium provided to participants is detailed at Appendix G.

The participants provided the following details about their personal circumstances.

	Female		Male		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Registered with Centrelink	7	3	2	2	9	5
Unemployed	2	3	2	2	4	5
Receiving Government Benefit	5	5	2	2	7	7
Available now for a job	7	3	4	0	11	3
Seeking Full-Time employment	2	8	4	0	6	8
Accept Part-Time	8	1	4	0	12	1
Accept Casual	7	2	4	0	11	2
Accept Temporary	5	4	4	0	9	4
More than 1 Part-Time	3	5	2	2	5	7
Self-Employment	1	6	2	2	3	8
Work Placement	3	6	0	1	3	7
Current Resume	6	4	4	0	10	4
Job Calling Cards	0	10	1	3	1	13

Follow-up

It is part of the NSYO's usual practice to follow up all clients that have used the agency. The research participants were provided with this service, in addition to the third questionnaire which was delivered over the telephone. All participants decided to register with the NSYO for ongoing job search support. At the follow-up contact could only be made with 11 of the 14 participants. All the female participants were contactable, but the researchers were unable to make contact with three of the four male participants. This also provided a gender difference between the male and female participation rates. (Note all analyses which involve comparisons with Questionnaire 3 are based on a total of 11 participants).

Results

The results indicate that some differences for the pre and post tests were identified. However, due to the small sample size further research will need to be conducted for a full statistical analysis to be undertaken. Our results are as follows:

Questionnaire 1

Questionnaire 1 was administered to participants prior to the workshop in a location outside the training room. The following mean results were identified in response to questionnaire 1:

Question	*Mean*
How hard would you say you are currently looking for a job?	*3.79*
How confident are you about your ability to prepare a good job application?	*3.00*
How confident are you about your ability to prepare a good resume?	*2.64*
How comfortable are you about your ability to contact employers and ask for a job?	*3.07*
How comfortable are you about attending an interview?	*3.29*
How confident are you about your ability to look for jobs in the newspaper?	*3.00*
How confident are you about your ability to find employer contact details by using the telephone book?	*3.00*
How confident are you about your ability to look for a job on the internet?	*4.14*
How happy are you about your ability to ask friends and relatives about jobs?	*2.21*
Have you read through the newspaper in search of jobs?	*1.64*
How often have you searched the newspaper for job vacancies?	*4.36*
Have you asked people you know about suitable job vacancies?	*1.21*
How often have you asked people you know about suitable job vacancies?	*4.71*
Do you think that joining a club or community group would help you with your job search?	*2.29*
How often do you participate as a member of a community group?	*4.29*
Have you searched the internet looking for job vacancies?	*3.07*
How often have you searched the internet looking for jobs?	*5.64*
Have you registered with employment agencies?	*1.57*

Questionnaire 2

Questionnaire 2 was completed by participants at the conclusion of the workshop. The following mean results were identified in response to questionnaire 2:

Question	*Mean*
How confident are you about your ability to prepare a good job application?	*2.64*
How confident are you about your ability to prepare a good resume?	*2.50*
How comfortable are you about your ability to contact employers and ask for a job?	*2.71*
How comfortable are you about attending an interview?	*2.50*
How confident are you about your ability to look for jobs in the newspaper?	*2.14*
How confident are you about your ability to find employer contact details by using the telephone book?	*2.21*
How confident are you about your ability to look for a job on the internet?	*3.36*
How happy are you about your ability to ask friends and relatives about jobs?	*2.21*
Do you think that joining a club or community group would help you with your job search?	*1.50*

Questionnaire 3

Questionnaire 3 was administered to participants by telephone at least two weeks after the workshop had been conducted. The following mean results were identified in response to questionnaire 3:

Question	*Mean*
How hard would you say you are currently looking for a job?	*3.55*
How confident are you about your ability to prepare a good job application?	*2.64*
How confident are you about your ability to prepare a good resume?	*2.91*
How comfortable are you about your ability to contact employers and ask for a job?	*2.82*
How comfortable are you about attending an interview?	*2.91*
How confident are you about your ability to look for jobs in the newspaper?	*2.55*
How confident are you about your ability to find employer contact details by using the telephone book?	*2.27*
How confident are you about your ability to look for a job on the internet?	*3.55*
How happy are you about your ability to ask friends and relatives about jobs?	*2.09*
Have you read through the newspaper in search of jobs?	*1.45*
How often have you searched the newspaper for job vacancies?	*4.36*
Have you asked people you know about suitable job vacancies?	*1.36*
How often have you asked people you know about suitable job vacancies?	*4.27*
Do you think that joining a club or community group would help you with your job search?	*1.64*
How often do you participate as a member of a community group?	*4.27*
Have you searched the internet looking for job vacancies?	*2.36*
How often have you searched the internet looking for jobs?	*5.73*
Have you registered with employment agencies?	*1.27*

Comparison of Questionnaire 1 and 2

With respect to Questionnaires 1 & 2 there were a total of 9 matched items, and an additional 5 unmatched items recorded as part of Questionnaire 1. These unmatched items will be discussed in more detail in relation to the results obtained for these questions which were also measured by Questionnaire 3.

Matched Pair t-Tests were conducted for the nine matched items. No differences were recorded between the pre and post workshop in relation to the participant's confidence in their ability to prepare a good job application, prepare a good resume, contact employers to ask for a job, and happiness to ask friends and relatives for a job.

Significant differences ($p<.05$) were found in relation to the following items. At the post test participants indicated that they were more confident about attending an interview, more confident about looking for jobs in the newspaper, more confident about their ability to find employer contact details in the telephone book, and more confident about looking for a job on the internet. Finally participants indicated after the workshop they were more confident that joining a club or community group would help them with their job search.

Comparison of Questionnaire 1 and 3

With respect to Questionnaires 1 & 3 there were a total of 18 matched items. Matched Pair t-Tests were conducted for the 18 matched items.

Job Search Intensity

No significant differences were recorded between questionnaire 1 and 3 with respect to job search intensity. Therefore participants were not searching either more or less at the follow-up as compared to their level prior to the workshop.

Job Search Efficacy

Significant differences were identified between questionnaire 1 and 3 with respect to job search efficacy. Overall participants were more confident in their ability to successfully perform job seeking tasks ($p<.005$). No significant differences were found for the individual items, with the exception of items 5, 6, and 7 which asked participants about how comfortable they were about attending an interview, looking for jobs in the newspaper, and searching for employer contact details in the telephone book respectively. Overall the participants were more confident about attending interviews ($p< .025$), looking for jobs in the newspaper ($p< .05$), and looking for employer contact details in the telephone book ($p< .025$) at the follow-up.

Exploration of the Labour Market

No significant differences were found for the individual items, with the exception of item 14, which asked participants whether they thought joining club or community group would assist them with their job search. Significant differences were found for this item which indicated that participants were more confident at the follow-up that joining club or community group would assist them with their job search.

Comparison of Questionnaire 2 and 3

With respect to Questionnaires 2 & 3 there were a total of 9 matched items, and an additional 5 unmatched items recorded as part of Questionnaire 3. Matched Pair t-Tests were conducted for the nine matched items. No differences were recorded between the post workshop and follow-up in relation to the participant's confidence in any of the job search efficacy areas, nor on the question relating to exploration of the labour market.

Discussion

The results indicated a number of note worthy findings. The first outcome of interest was that gender differences emerged in workshop attendance. Despite making contact with sufficient relevant individuals regarding the workshop for both groups, we did not meet our quota of male participants. At the follow-up, only one of the four male participants was able to be contacted, in spite of the fact that the participants agreed to a follow up at the initial workshop. All the females were contacted. This limited our ability to fully analyse the data to identify gender differences in job search literacy. Further research will therefore be required in this area.

Anecdotal gender differences were observed in how the male and female groups interacted with the material presented at the workshop. Overall the male participants mostly focussed on the financial issues associated with job search, and the female participants explored a diverse range of issues but with a strong emphasis on sexism towards them as women and how it affects their job search. While the sample is too small to form conclusions, no one in the male participant group knew which day to look in the newspaper, while the female group were cognisant of the newspaper job advertising days in Western Australia. Similarly, the participants in male group did not use the telephone directory most suited to requirements of the phone book activity (for the purposes of the workshops, defined as passive written literacy) while two respondents in the female group did.

The female group was candid with the workshop facilitator regarding their personal experiences of job search experiences of job search and how this related to their wider life experiences. As the example of one of their newspaper collages demonstrates (see report cover) the respondents had high hopes regarding job seeking, but they identified a gap between themselves and the world of work. However, their perceptions were that their physical attractiveness was an issue (eg. that "sex appeal" "big boobs" and wearing a short skirt was required); that there were lots of jobs, but not necessarily for women; and that there were less options for women in the workforce.

McClaren and Lankshear ask: "How is cultural reality encoded within familiar grids or frames of intelligibility so that literacy practices that unwittingly affirm racism, sexism and heterosexism, for example, are rendered natural and commonsensical?" (1993, p. 413). Certainly, for the female participants, based upon participant comments and the five collages, their cultural reality was encoded sufficiently by media portrayals of 'successful' working women that it was considered 'natural' that female physical attractiveness was a significant factor in employment, and perhaps 'common sense' to acquiesce in particular practices, such as wearing a short skirt. Whether wearing a short skirt is necessarily appropriate is, however, a debatable issue and indeed, could be inappropriate in some settings. Such knowledge of appropriateness, we suggest, could be further explored as a social literacy competency in job seeking. It is also noteworthy that in the female group, a pressing concern of the respondents was where to access suitable clothes for interviews, since they and their friends did not own, and could not afford, appropriate garments. The male group was more focussed upon cleanliness at interview.

The researchers believe that similar workshops conducted with mixed gender groups are likely to achieve different outcomes and would be worthy of exploration. It is not known whether issues surrounding sexism in job seeking would have been raised by females in a mixed group.

The collages created by both the male and female groups provide further support for McClaren and Lankshear's assertion regarding the encoding of cultural reality and the connection with literacy practices. As discussed earlier, Barber et al (1994, p.744), indicated that many job searchers hold unrealistic expectations regarding the process and outcomes of job search and this was true for the majority of the respondents in both groups. A job represented a culmination of hopes and dreams in a "killer world" (male respondent). Money was a major theme for both groups; its requirement for job seeking as well as a reward for employment. A respondent in the female group perceived a problematic cycle in that a car was required for a job, and a job was needed to buy a car. A respondent in the male group cut out the words "Wheels falling off a dream". The perceived requirement of a car framed their reality, and separated, if not isolated them along the axis of socio-economic status (specifically, of unemployment). Social literacy practices are not unaffected by class, any less than they are by race or gender. The challenge for enabling the development of job search literacy skills is to "recognise that dominant social arrangements are dominant not because they are the only possible arrangements but because those arrangements exist for the advantage of certain privileged groups" (McLaren and Lankshear, 1993:414). As such, job search literacies must be adaptable and flexible, in order to navigate along the lines of diversity and inequality.

According to the respondents, money was also required to buy suitable clothing for interviews, as well as to buy newspapers to look for jobs. Participants also viewed the costs associated with electronic literacy as prohibitive and had access difficulties to computers, phones, faxes and photocopiers. It was 'commonsensical' to the participants, then, that a certain socio-economic status or level would enable them to find jobs. However, as this study has demonstrated, there are social literacy skills which incorporate low cost options for job seeking[1], and effective use of resources (ie by purchasing the newspaper on a particular day, by accessing databases with jobs in a local area). Sufficient knowledge of these options is, we suggest, in line with the literature reviewed above, currently stratified and may be addressed by the recognition and development of job search literacy skills, especially for groups who are not currently advantaged in the labour market.

Another area of interest is what for the purposes of this study was termed 'network literacy'. As stated above, recruitment industry estimates indicate that at least 60% of positions are not advertised and are filled through employer networks and contacts. Drentea (1998, p. 322) points out that personal networks are the most common way to find a job. Both groups realised after the network mapping activity that they had more personal contacts than they would have at first assumed and that job seeking connections could be made in non-formal ways.

[1] The cost of phone calls was raised as an issue in the workshops. Respondents in both groups commented on the change from the 013 directory number, which was a free call, to 12455. It was indicated that this new number and confusion about costs of directory calls and assistance hindered their job searching.

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The activity which explored the process of canvassing and cold calling was valued by the participants in both groups, according to feedback. While forms of introduction and inquiry were known, the workshop facilitator found that the most common flaw within both groups was that the participants did not think of advising the employer of their skills or why to employ them. This suggests that social literacy skills interact with confidence for effectiveness. Research on the importance of self confidence and employment is widely documented, especially with regard to women and the workforce (O'Connor, 1988).

The most traditional literacy exercise, on form filling, revealed varying levels of skill. For a minority, forms were not problematic. For the majority, filling out forms was seen as "boring", "tedious", "difficult", "sometimes confusing" and "intimidating". In this exercise female respondents commented that "sex appeal" governed whether an application form was provided to them, and they questioned the use of photographs, which was seen as irrelevant but of advantage to the prospective employer. This exercise especially highlighted the need for clear questions and instructions on forms.

There was a range of significant findings based upon the questionnaires.

Questionnaire 1

The results of the first questionnaire, the pre-test, indicated that in response to the question, How hard would you say you are currently looking for a job?, the mean response for both participant groups was 3.79. This indicated that participants felt they were looking somewhere between 'a little' and 'moderately'.

With respect to the questions relating to job search efficacy the means indicated that participants rated themselves as at least moderate with regard to their confidence to: prepare a good job application, prepare a good resume, look for jobs in the newspaper, find employer contact details in the telephone book, and ask friends and relatives about jobs. Participants were less confident about their ability to contact employers and ask for a job, attending an interview, and looking for a job on the internet.

With respect to the questions relating to exploration of the labour market and more specifically with respect to application of job search methodologies, the majority of participants indicated that they had considered looking in the newspaper for jobs, but had not done it, had asked people they know about job vacancies, didn't think that joining a club or community group would help them find a job, have considered using the internet to search for jobs but don't know how, and had registered with employment agencies. The frequency for undertaking these activities indicated that with respect to searching the newspaper, asking people they know about job vacancies, and participating in clubs and community groups, participants undertake these activities on average less than twice a month. With respect to searching the internet for jobs, participants undertake this activity less than once a month. As discussed in the introduction, these levels are insufficient for effective job searching.

Questionnaire 1 also revealed another interesting finding, that participants felt that they were searching for a job 'a little' to 'moderately'. Given that eleven of the fourteen participants

indicated that they were available for employment immediately this indicates either a lack of motivation or skills and knowledge about how to undertake a job search.

Questionnaire 2

In relation to questionnaire 2, the post test, the majority of questions related to job search efficacy. The participants indicated that they were at least moderate with regard to their confidence to complete all of the job search tasks described, with the exception of confidence in their ability to look for a job on the internet which was rated at a less than moderate level. Finally participants were confident that joining a club or community would help them to find a job.

The comparisons between questionnaire 1 and 2 revealed that at the post test participants were more confident about attending an interview, more confident about looking for jobs in the newspaper, more confident about their ability to find employer contact details in the telephone book, and more confident about looking for a job on the internet. Finally participants indicated after the workshop they were more confident that joining a club or community group would help them with their job search. Therefore at this initial stage the results indicated that the workshop provided participants with confidence, skills and knowledge regarding how to conduct an effective job search.

Questionnaire 3

This follow up questionnaire was carried out by telephone. It was intended to ascertain whether the workshops had impacted how hard participants were looking for a job, and whether their confidence in applying the job search methodologies had changed.

The results of the third questionnaire indicated that in response to the question, How hard would you say you are currently looking for a job?, the mean response for both participant groups was 3.55. This indicated that participants felt they were looking somewhere between 'a little' and 'moderately'.

With respect to the questions relating to job search efficacy the means indicated that participants rated themselves as at least moderate with regard to their confidence to: prepare a good job application, prepare a good resume, contacting an employer to ask for a job, attending an interview, look for jobs in the newspaper, find employer contact details in the telephone book, and ask friends and relatives about jobs. Participants were less confident about their abilities to look for a job on the Internet.

With respect to the questions relating to exploration of the labour market and more specifically with regard to application of job search methodologies the majority of participants indicated that they had considered looking in the newspaper for jobs, but had not done it, had asked people they know about job vacancies, didn't think that joining a club or community group would help them find a job, have considered using the Internet to search for

jobs but haven't done it, and had registered with employment agencies. The frequency for undertaking these activities indicated that with respect to searching the newspaper, asking people they know about job vacancies, and participating in clubs and community groups, participants undertake these activities on average less than twice a month. With respect to searching the Internet for jobs participants undertake this activity less than once a month.

At follow up, there were few significant differences were recorded between questionnaire 1 and 3, as indicated in the results section. These results were based upon the eleven respondents. With regard to job search intensity, the participants were not searching either more or less than they were prior to the workshop. However, there were significant differences with regard to job search efficacy. This suggests that the workshop provided skills which would make their job searches more effective, in spite of the fact that their job search intensity had not increased. Further longitudinal research would be an opportunity to track the gains of job search literacy efficacy with regard to employment. Future research may also indicate why job search intensity levels remain low among groups who describe themselves as immediately available for employment, what other skills could address this and whether access is an issue. Research with larger numbers and multiple groups would also be advantageous.

Conclusion

This study has examined the social literacies and associate skills required by young job seekers. It has also explored the use of peer group workshops as a way to assist young job seekers to both learn and practice these skills. Whilst the male participant group was too small to draw conclusions from, there appear to be gendered differences in both the issues raised and skills used.

A further exploration of the social literacy of job seeking represents wide avenues for research. While traditional literacy competencies remain vital, we hope that this study points to other broader social literacy competencies, which require recognition and development. As McLaren and Lankshear (1993, p. 412) write, "[i]t is important to remember that literacies are always brittle and that through the cracks seep the stuff of possibility."

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Appendices

Appendix A

Researcher Workshop

The researchers met on the 9 November 2000. A brainstorming session was conducted regarding the researchers perceptions of the issues related to youth job seeking. The results of the brainstorming session are summarised as follows:

- Attitudes, self esteem, family and peer pressure
- Written literacy
- Sourcing and accessing information
- Questioning
- Motivation
- Fear of failure
- Job readiness, and awareness of own skills
- Networking
- Expectations
- Lack of direction
- Social literacy
- Knowledge of the labour market
  Interview skills

Appendix B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Date of Birth: ____/___/____

Gender: ☐ **Male** ☐ **Female**

Thank you for taking part in this project and workshop. Please read this questionnaire and take your time answering the questions. If you have any questions please feel free to ask Pamela for assistance.

Please circle

1. **How hard would you say you are currently looking for a job?**

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – A little e – Not at all

2. **How confident are you about your ability to prepare a good job application?**

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

3. **How confident are you about your ability to prepare a good resume?**

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

4. **How comfortable are you about your ability to contact employers and ask for a job?**

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

5. **How comfortable are you about attending an interview?**

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

6. **How confident are you about your ability to look for jobs in the newspaper?**

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

7. **How confident are you about your ability to find employer contact details by using the telephone book?**

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

8. **How confident are you about your ability to look for a job on the internet?**

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a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

9. How happy are you about your ability to ask friends and relatives about jobs?

a – Extremely Happy
b – Very Happy
c – Moderately Happy
d – Slightly Happy
e – Not at all happy

10. Have you read through the newspaper in search of jobs?

a – I have done this
b – I have considered this, but have not done this
c - I have not considered this

11. How often have you searched the newspaper for job vacancies?

a – Daily
b – Twice a week
c – Once a week
d – Twice a month
e – Once a month
f – Never

12. Have you asked people you know about suitable job vacancies?

a – I have done this
b – I have considered this, but have not done this
c – I have not considered this

13. How often have you asked people you know about suitable job vacancies?

a – Daily
b – Twice a week
c – Once a week
d – Twice a month
e – Once a month
f – Never

14. Do you think that joining a club or community group would help you with your job search?

a – I do

b – I don't think it would help
c – I'm not sure

Appendix B

15. How often do you participate as a member of a community group?

a – Daily
b – Twice a week
c – Once a week
d – Twice a month
e – Once a month
f – Never

16. Have you searched the internet looking for job vacancies?

a – I have done this
b – I have considered this, but have not done this
c – I have considered this, but I don't how
d – I have considered this, but don't have access
e – I have not considered this

17. How often have you searched the internet looking for jobs?

a – Daily
b – Twice a week
c – Once a week
d – Twice a month
e – Once a month
f – Never

18. Have you registered with employment agencies?

a – I have done this
b – I have considered this, but have not done this
c – I have considered this, but don't know where to go
d – I have not considered this

Appendix C

QUESTIONNAIRE

Date of Birth: ____/___/____

Gender: ☐ **Male** ☐ **Female**

Thank you for taking part in this project and workshop. Please read this questionnaire and take your time answering the questions. If you have any questions please feel free to ask Pamela for assistance.

Please circle

1. How confident are you about your ability to prepare a good job application?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

2. How confident are you about your ability to prepare a good resume?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

3. How comfortable are you about your ability to contact employers and ask for a job?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

4. How comfortable are you about attending an interview?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

5. How confident are you about your ability to look for jobs in the newspaper?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

6. How confident are you about your ability to find employer contact details by using the telephone book?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

7. How confident are you about your ability to look for a job on the internet?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

8. How happy are you about your ability to ask friends and relatives about jobs?

a – Extremely Happy
b – Very Happy
c – Moderately Happy
d – Slightly Happy
e – Not at all happy

9. Do you think that joining a club or community group would help you with your job search?

a – I do
b – I don't think it would help
c – I'm not sure

Appendix D

QUESTIONNAIRE

Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Gender: ☐ **Male** ☐ **Female**

Thank you for taking part in this project and workshop. Please read this questionnaire and take your time answering the questions. If you have any questions please feel free to ask Pamela for assistance.

Please circle

1. How hard would you say you are currently looking for a job?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – A little e – Not at all

2. How confident are you about your ability to prepare a good job application?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

3. How confident are you about your ability to prepare a good resume?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

4. How comfortable are you about your ability to contact employers and ask for a job?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

5. How comfortable are you about attending an interview?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

6. How confident are you about your ability to look for jobs in the newspaper?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

7. How confident are you about your ability to find employer contact details by using the telephone book?

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

8. How confident are you about your ability to look for a job on the internet?

Appendix D

a - Extremely b - Very c – Moderately d – Slightly e – Not at all

9. How happy are you about your ability to ask friends and relatives about jobs?

a – Extremely Happy
b – Very Happy
c – Moderately Happy
d – Slightly Happy
e – Not at all happy

10. Have you read through the newspaper in search of jobs?

a – I have done this
b – I have considered this, but have not done this
c - I have not considered this

11. How often have you searched the newspaper for job vacancies?

a – Daily
b – Twice a week
c – Once a week
d – Twice a month
e – Once a month
f – Never

12. Have you asked people you know about suitable job vacancies?

a – I have done this
b – I have considered this, but have not done this
c – I have not considered this

13. How often have you asked people you know about suitable job vacancies?

a – Daily
b – Twice a week
c – Once a week
d – Twice a month
e – Once a month
f – Never

14. Do you think that joining a club or community group would help you with your job search?

Appendix D

a – I do
b – I don't think it would help
c – I'm not sure

Appendix D

15. How often do you participate as a member of a community group?

a – Daily
b – Twice a week
c – Once a week
d – Twice a month
e – Once a month
f – Never

16. Have you searched the internet looking for job vacancies?

a – I have done this
b – I have considered this, but have not done this
c – I have considered this, but I don't how
d – I have considered this, but don't have access
e – I have not considered this

17. How often have you searched the internet looking for jobs?

a – Daily
b – Twice a week
c – Once a week
d – Twice a month
e – Once a month
f – Never

18. Have you registered with employment agencies?

a – I have done this
b – I have considered this, but have not done this
c – I have considered this, but don't know where to go
d – I have not considered this

Appendix E

Social Literacy and The Young Job Seeker

Date: November 13 – 14 2000
Time: 9.30 – 3pm
Venue: Northern Suburbs Youth Options (NSYO) Training Room
Facilitator: Sam Raisbeck – Youth Officer NSYO (f)
(a.m. wearing Youth Officer Gear / p.m. wearing Office Gear
Evaluator: Pamela Weatherill – Manager NSYO (f)
Room Set up: Open circle – Tables on room edge

Session one: Maximum 10 male job seekers aged 14-25 years
Session two: Maximum 10 female job seekers aged 14-25 years

Pre-Test - Conduit between research and pilot workshop. Meet in kitchen with morning tea. Staff: Sam and Pamela to meet and greet. Pamela to administer pre-test and consent form. Participants to choose vouchers for honorarium. Sam to undertake a tour of the premises.

Warm-up - For group dynamic building.

Passive Written Literacy – Newspapers - Brainstorming activity. Activity – Pairs to cut and paste onto butcher's paper (West Australian Newspaper Saturday edition and Community News).

Passive Written Literacy – Telephone books, postcodes - Activity – "The Phonebook grab".

Morning Tea

Active Written Literacy – Form Filling -Open discussion on form filling. Activity – Solo flying form filling. (Pamela to check forms and copy during break)

Electronic Literacy – Telephones, fax machines, touch screen, the internet, photocopier -
Brainstorm – What electronic equipment assists with job searching?
Discussion – Use of electronic media and job searching. Accessing the equipment.

Lunch

Paralinguistic Literacy – Cold calling, phone manner, interview – Activity – "Phone Circle" – leading to cold calling. Activity – The interview.

Network Literacy – Where to go for information or help – Activity – Network mapping. Brainstorm – Where to go for assistance of varying kinds.

Evaluation - Brainstorm the positives and negatives of the workshop.

Post Test - Administered by Pamela.

Appendix F

Social Literacy and The Young Job Seeker

Date: November 13 – 14 2000
Time: 9.30 – 3pm
Venue: Northern Suburbs Youth Options (NSYO) Training Room
Facilitator: Sam Raisbeck – Youth Officer NSYO (f)
(a.m. wearing Youth Officer Gear / p.m. wearing Office Gear
Evaluator: Pamela Weatherill – Manager NSYO (f)
Room Set up: Open circle – Tables on room edge

Session one: Maximum 10 male job seekers aged 14-25 years
Session two: Maximum 10 female job seekers aged 14-25 years

Post Workshop Evaluation Notes

Warm Up:

The groups were more than happy to participate in this exercise and showed interest in what the others had to say. Both the males and the females responded to this exercise, with everyone participating.

Passive Written Literacy – Newspapers:

Both groups responded quite differently to this exercise in relation to the comments that they made. The male group (G1) mostly focussed on the cost issue and the fact that the paper is a cheap way to find jobs. The female group (G2) focussed on a diverse range of issues but with a strong emphasis on sexism towards them as women and how it effects their job search.

It was very interesting that no one in G1 mentioned when to read the paper. When asked what was the best day to read, not one person knew it was Wednesday and Saturday. G2 however, were fully aware of the days the paper had the most jobs advertised.

G1 comments were as follows:
The Newspapers:

- Advertise jobs
- Provide Phone no's so you can find out about job
- Find out what qualifications you need for certain positions
- Cheap way to find a job
- Cheap to buy
- Cheap to purchase
- There's definitely a job there rather than asking around
- All situated in one area of the paper
- Community paper
- Make it easier for location- its put in location categories
- Gives you an idea of how many jobs are in the market
- Not just jobs but career opportunities- Apprenticeships / Traineeships / Tickets (Forklift)
- Easier to get

Appendix F

- You can apply for quite a few jobs at one time to increase your chances

Appendix F

G2 Comments were as follows:
The Newspapers:

- West Australian
- Read small print
- Go to Employment section in Classifieds
- Don't bother with people go out and ask people
- Look for a job- you never find one
- Put off- 5 million people looking
- Read on Wednesday and Saturday
- Expect too much
- Don't give you a chance- expect too much experience
- Always ask for a car and a junior
- Looking for a job to get money- to get car
- Not much explanation
- Recycle them
- Don't have a good education
- Less options for women in workforce
- Lots of jobs- not necessarily for women
- Trades only interested in guys
- Watch out for commission only jobs

The next activity the groups were asked to do, was to cut and paste anything in the newspapers that is relevant to their job search or that symbolises employment or job search to them. Both the groups responded to this activity with great enthusiasm and creativity.

Some of the issues / themes were:

G1

- Jobs
- Lots of jobs
- Study
- Tafe
- Lots of options
- Expect delays
- Pain in the neck
- Killer world

G2

- Money
- Take control of your life
- Career related
- Transport / car issues
- The West Australian
- The Community Newspaper
- Confusion over emotions
- Sexism
- Needs of women

Passive Written Literacy

The Phonebook Grab:
Each group responded quite differently to this exercise. The groups were told to get up and see who could be the first person to get the facilitator the phone number of Innaloo McDonalds. Their was no limit to how or what they could use to determine the number and they were shown to the table which had yellow pages, white pages, and a telephone.

Appendix F

In G1 no one thought of using the telephone 013 directory (now changed to 12455). Many went to the yellow pages first. On discussion, they all said that they would usually use the 013 directory, but did not think of it in this instance. They also said that because it has changed it now costs money (whereas before it was free) and this was cited as an issue "unless you're using someone else's phone".

In G2 two people did go straight to the telephone for 013 directory (now changed to 12455). They did also go to the white pages first.

Active Written Literacy – Form Filling

Open discussion on form Filling.
G1 response:

- Boring
- Asked too much information
- Easier to process for the person receiving the form
- Don't care
- Annoying when they give a multi choice question and the answer you've got is not there
- Depends on form- some easy to understand, some don't set out what they want to say
- Some quick- some too long
- Easier filling out form than filling out your own document
- Centrelink forms for payment
- Application forms (Maccas)
- Centrelink forms too personal- information about girlfriend

G2 response:

- Tedious
- Too much thinking
- That sux
- Cost of police clearance –re criminal question
- Get a pen that works
- Questions
- Sex appeal influences whether you get given an application for a job
- Sometimes confusing
- Every Monday for Centrelink
- Job networks
- Pain in the ass
- Job application forms pretty bodgy
- Like a test
- Done in blue pen
- Intimidating
- Sometimes ask for photos-relevant? Advantage to them
- All you can do is answer the questions
- Too structured not personal

The second part of this topic was for the group to fill out the standard NSYO registration form unassisted to be able to ascertain their skills in relation to the practical side of form filling opposed to verbalising

them. This showed varying levels of ability and highlighted the need for clear questions and instructions.

Appendix F

Paralinguistic Literacy

(For the purpose of this topic the facilitator changed during the lunch break into office wear)

This topic commenced with open discussion on interviews- where someone from the group would get up and scribe for the others. The comments were as follows:

G1 :

- Dressing
- Dress shirt
- Tie
- Trousers
- Shave
- Dress shoes
- No baggy jeans
- Dress for the job
- Take piercings out
- NO slang
- Shower
- Brush hair
- Aftershave
- Tuck in shirt
- Iron clothes

G2:

- Where to get interview clothes
- Wash your clothes
- Neat
- Tie hair back
- Girls can't wear pants
- Shoes
- Not much jewellery (facial piercing)
- Clean nails
- Op shops
- Scarf etc to jazz it up

The groups both had different views on what was most important in relation to the interview dress standard, appearance etc. The G1 participants displayed a leniency towards cleanliness: mentioning showering and shaving. The G2 participants showed more interest in the issue of *where* to get appropriate interview clothes. Their only emphasis on cleanliness, was the cleanliness of their clothes and nails.

Following this exercise was open discussion and question time on the actual interview itself. Both groups had very little understanding of what is expected of them in an interview situation and participants from both groups thought that it was an expectation of them from the employer to discuss money issues during the interview. Both groups were very attentive during this discussion and asked a lot of different questions. It appeared that this was an area of weakness which they felt in relation job search literacy.

** At this point in workshop one (with G1) the topic shifted to Electronic Literacy, so for the purpose of maintaining similar or the same structure throughout the project for research purposes, this structure was maintained in workshop two (with G2) also.*

Electronic Literacy

This topic began with a brief brainstorming session on:

What electronic equipment assists with job searching?

Appendix F

G1 responses were as follows:	
	Pros & Cons
• Mobile Phones	
• Fax machines	• hard to use • fax versus phone no's
• Photocopiers	• easy • expensive when doing lots • depends where you go • Free here (limited) • Centrelink free as much as you want
• Computers/hard drives /scanners	
• Beeper	
• Normal phone	
• Save on disk to reuse later	
• Internet-do searches for jobs	
• Typing resume	
• Touch screens	• Pain in the ass • More personal than the newspaper • Screen gets dirty • Print out gives good amount of info re job • Don't have to think about where to look for jobs • Basic • Easier to find things • They break • Easier than using a mouse

G2 responses were as follows:
• Computer- Internet- email • Faxes and telephone • Watch • Mobile phone • Alarm clocks • Vibrator 3 speed • Washing machine • Photocopier

While doing this exercise the groups were encouraged to ask questions and give their own feedback. Issues related to accessing such equipment were raised.

Paralinguistic Literacy - Cold Calling / Cold Canvassing

Generally speaking, the groups had a good understanding of what cold calling might be, but most were not sure what to say or how to approach this method of job search. On completion of this exercise, the groups were brought into group discussion about cold calling and how it is useful. The next step in the exercise was to get back into pairs and each write exactly what they would say to someone on the phone to get a job.

Appendix F

The most basic flaw within both the groups was that they did not think of advising the employer of their skills or why to employ them. They knew the very basics- who to ask for and to introduce themselves but aside from that the majority had no concept of how to sell themselves. This seemed to be a really important workshop for both groups. All participants seemed very keen to receive feedback on what they said and how they could improve this for next time.

The discussion on cold calling following their mock run led into the discussion on cold canvassing. The facilitator demonstrated to both groups ineffective and effective cold canvassing so that they could see first hand how acquiring this skill can assist in their job search.

Network Literacy

For this topic the word 'network' was firstly explored, and explained if necessary. Then we discussed who our own networks were and as a group create a large network map of who we already have as existing networks and who where we can go for assistance. This created quite a lot of discussion in both groups with many realising that they had more contacts than they would have first assumed.

Evaluation

Both groups were asked to give some feedback on the workshop and all involved were quite happy to do so. They each had to write their own feedback onto the Butcher's paper and were encouraged to write as much as they wanted to.

Appendix G

HONORARIUM

Participants were offered a $20 honorarium for their participation in this study. $20 vouchers were offered at the following retail outlets:

- Target
- K-Mart
- Liquor Land
- Angus & Robertson's Book Store

Participants requested the following vouchers:

Target	8
K-Mart	0
Liquor Land	3
Angus & Robertson's Book Store	3

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